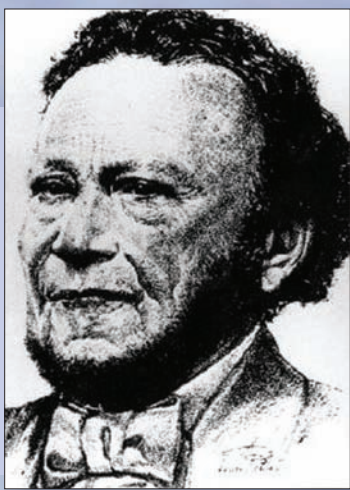


# LEADING THE WAY

## CELEBRATING DIVERSITY AND VOTING RIGHTS IN WASHINGTON STATE



HistoryLink.org; George Washington Bush (1790? – 1863), n.d.; Courtesy Henderson House Museum

**1845** Washington's first African-American settler, George Washington Bush, came to Thurston County. He became the only African-American to receive a Donation Land Grant in Washington. Bush never obtained citizenship despite efforts by his supporters in the Legislature and was denied his voting rights.

**1867** The first Civil Rights Act was passed by the U.S. Congress. The Act allowed all citizens of the U.S. to vote, regardless of race or color. Some states and territories still denied the franchise to certain citizens.

**1868** The 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the U.S. Constitution granted full citizenship rights, which included voting rights, to all persons born or naturalized in the U.S.

**1870** The 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the U.S. Constitution eliminated racial barriers to voting; however, many states continued practicing voter discrimination.

**1910** Washington State voters approved the 5<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the State Constitution, which allowed all persons, regardless of sex, to vote.

**1920** The 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the U.S. Constitution granted suffrage to women.

**1923** Initiative 40 was passed by Washington State voters, repealing the poll tax. A poll tax is a fee charged to citizens as a requirement to voting. Poll taxes were used in many states as a way to discriminate against certain voters.



LOT 5540, League of Women Voters

**1924** The Indian Citizenship Act granted citizenship and voting rights to Native Americans.



President Coolidge with four Osage Native Americans; LC-USZ62-111409

**1942** Executive Order 9066 signed by President Roosevelt called for the evacuation of all Japanese-Americans living in Western states to internment camps. Despite being American citizens, their rights were denied, including their right to vote. In 1976 President Ford declared the Japanese-American incarceration a "national mistake" and in 1988 President Reagan signed a law that provided reparations to surviving internees.

University of Washington student Gordon Hirabayashi defied wartime evacuation orders of Japanese-Americans. He turned himself in to the FBI and submitted a four page statement explaining why he defied wartime imprisonment based on his Constitutional rights. He was arrested, convicted, and imprisoned. His case went before the Supreme Court as the first judiciary challenge to the government's wartime expulsion of Japanese-Americans. By 1987 Hirabayashi was exonerated of all charges by a Federal District Court.



Japanese-Americans boarding trains for relocation; Courtesy Franklin D. Roosevelt Library; NARA

**1960** The U.S. Congress passed the Civil Rights Act. It required election officials to keep all voter registration records and allowed the Department of Justice to inspect them. The Act allowed citizens whose registrations were previously rejected to apply to a federal court.

**1961** Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. arrived in Seattle for his only visit to Washington and encouraged new legislation that would create a uniform pattern for voter registration and ban literacy tests. In 1986, the King County Council passed motion 6461, which re-designated King County to commemorate Dr. King instead of William Rufus DeVane King, the Vice President for whom the county was originally named in 1852.



Courtesy Lyndon B. Johnson Library; NARA

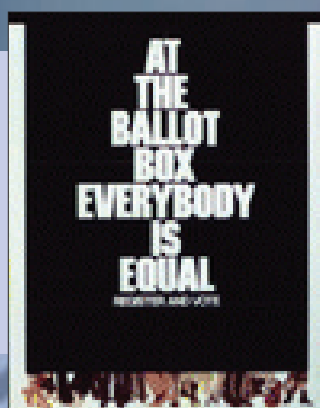
**1964** The 24<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the U.S. Constitution eliminated poll taxes.

**1964** President Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act, which strengthened the law prohibiting racial discrimination at poll sites, hotels, restaurants, etc. The law covers discrimination on the basis of race, national origin, and religion.

**1965** The Immigration and Naturalization Act gave equal citizenship rights, including voting rights, to all nationalities.

**1965** The federal Voting Rights Act passed.

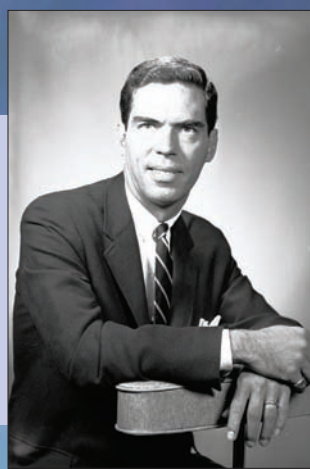
- ★ Literacy tests were suspended, federal enforcement of registration and voting rights was provided, and the prohibition on poll taxes was extended.
- ★ It became illegal for any state or local government to discriminate against racial minorities in election related practices and procedures.
- ★ Federal observers were authorized to attend vote counting procedures during elections.
- ★ Any voter could be given assistance by a person of the voter's choice by reason of blindness, disability, or inability to read or write.



"At the ballot box everybody is equal." LC-USZ62-5552; NVRA/CP

**1969** The Washington State Commission on the Cause and Prevention of Civil Disorder was chaired by Secretary of State A. Ludlow Kramer. The Commission issued a report that cited discrimination in the treatment of blacks as a major cause for civil unrest in Washington. The report provided 89 recommendations, including constitutional amendments and tax reforms as solutions.

**1971** The 26<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the U.S. Constitution expanded full voting rights to 18-year old U.S. citizens.



Courtesy Washington State Archives



Courtesy Washington State Archives

**1970** State Representative Peggy Joan Maxie, representing the 37<sup>th</sup> District, was the first African-American woman elected to public office in Washington.

**1972** The Washington Secretary of State began printing Voters' Pamphlets in languages other than English.

**1972** Washington voters passed the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) to the State Constitution, which prohibited discrimination on the basis of sex in all areas of public life. Washington was one of only nine states to pass such an amendment at the time.

**1975** The federal Voting Rights Act was renewed, permanently banning literacy tests nationwide. Relevant sections of the Act required jurisdictions with significant numbers of voters with limited or no English proficiency to provide elections and voting materials in languages other than English. The Act also required poll sites to have oral translation available where needed.



Courtesy Washington State Archives



Courtesy Washington State Archives

**1976** Dixy Lee Ray became the first woman governor of Washington.



Courtesy Ronald Reagan Library; NARA

**1983** President Reagan signed the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Federal Holiday bill. The legislation established the third Monday of every January as the Martin Luther King, Jr. Federal Holiday.

**1984** The Voting Accessibility for the Elderly and Handicapped Act required polling places in the U.S. to be accessible to people with disabilities.



Courtesy Washington State Senate

**1988** State Senator Margarita López Prentice, representing the 11<sup>th</sup> District, was the first Latina elected to public office in Washington.



Courtesy George Bush Library; NARA

**1990** The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) passed, further providing for ballot and poll site access for those with disabilities.

**1992** The Washington Secretary of State developed the Motor Voter Program as a convenient form of voter registration. The program allowed U.S. citizens to register to vote when they obtained or renewed their driver's license. Washington's Motor Voter program was the first of its kind to create a computer link between voter registration and driver licensing records.

**1993** The National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) passed the U.S. Congress. U.S. citizens were now allowed nationwide to register to vote when they obtained or renewed their driver's license. The NVRA allowed the Department of Justice to bring civil actions in federal court to enforce its requirements.

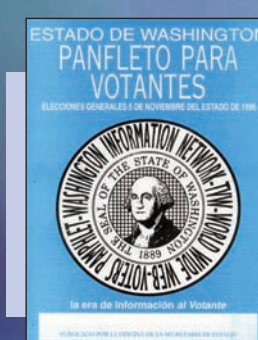


HistoryLink.org; ca. 1988; Courtesy Office of the Governor

**1996** Gary Locke became Washington State Governor and the first Chinese-American governor on the U.S. mainland.

**2002** The Help America Vote Act (HAVA) was enacted. The law created a bipartisan Election Assistance Commission and expanded the role of the federal government in elections.

- ★ Updating voting equipment
- ★ Expanding disability access
- ★ Providing provisional ballots
- ★ Allowing people to vote by mail
- ★ Creating statewide voter registration databases
- ★ Training poll workers
- ★ Educating voters



**2002** As a result of the 2000 Census, the Department of Justice instructed Adams, Franklin, King, and Yakima counties to comply with the language mandates under the Voting Rights Act. The counties are now required to produce election materials in languages other than English.



Washington  
Secretary of State  
SAM REED

For more information on Voting and Elections in Washington, go to [www.secstate.wa.gov](http://www.secstate.wa.gov)

Poster created and distributed by the Elections Division of the Office of the Secretary of State, Washington.